

REMINISCENCES

Stories Eminently Worth Telling of Experiences and Adventures
In the Great National Struggle.

LONGEST MARCH IN THE WAR.

The 11th Kan. Cav. Claims that It Made It, and Suffered Intense from Cold and Hunger.

Editor National Tribune: I have been reading Comrade R. W. Peck's story, "Wagon Boss," and I have enjoyed it very much; and as he has praised the Colonel of my regiment, Thomas Moonlight, very highly, I will try to tell the readers of The National Tribune the part that the 11th Kan. Cav. took in the Price raid, and in any regiment in the civil war made a longer trip (be-cause of a settled camp again) and endured the pangs of hunger and cold more than we did on this trip, I would like to hear from them. The 14th of October, 1864, my company (C), 11th Kan. Cav., then at Coldwater Grove, 20 miles or more south of Kansas City, Mo., got an order to march east to help drive Price back south. In the afternoon of the 17th we were at Sedalia, 60 miles east of Coldwater Grove. At Warrensburg we were joined by other companies of our regiment, until I believe we had 11 companies together. We also met Gen. Jas. G. Blunt and Col. Moonlight, who were in line to form one brigade, including some Kansas and Missouri militia, commanded by Gen. Jim Lane. At Sedalia we fed our horses and ate our supper, thinking we would be in the city by morning, but after all was still Gen. Blunt received word that Price had left the railroad at California, and was then between Bonville and Lexington; so the brigades were ordered to march, and we took up the march on the road to Lexington, 45 miles away. We reached Lexington a little before noon of the next day, the 18th, but the town had already been abandoned by Price. His troops withdrew in favor of us until 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when Price's army came up in force. Gen. Blunt's forces were in line of battle south of town, in what I thought was a strong position. My company (C) was dismounted and deployed as skirmishers. Just at that time "Wild Bill" brought the word to Gen. Blunt that a division of Price's army was going around to the south of us, to cut off our retreat to Kansas City on the west, so as to surround us. A heavy light could form the troops in shape to retreat the column started. My company being dismounted and the rebels coming on us in a charge, some of the men lost their horses, and in the confusion, where the horses were, in gallant style. And right here I want to say a word of praise for Col. Tom Moonlight in his cool bravery in managing the retreat. He kept back with the skirmish line, encouraging the men to stand firm. He formed a new line along the front of a corn field with a wide meadow in the back, and the rebels across this meadow until they were about 75 yards from us. In the first volley they fired at us they killed Chas. V. Hyde, our Orderly Sergeant. Then they ordered us to surrender. When I looked around I discovered that I was there in front of the rebel lines alone. The only one of our command that I could see was my first lieutenant, J. P. Phillips. He was out in the road about 100 yards to my right, behind some trees, waiting for me. Just why the rebels did not shoot us is a mystery, for they did not want to surrender, and they ordered us to surrender, and I walked my horse parallel along the fence until I came to a gap in the fence, as much as 75 yards from where I was in the line, and I saw the rebels telling me to surrender. As soon as I got in the road I put my horse to a lope, and in about a half mile I came to where Moonlight had formed a new line in a deep cut close by the Fair Ground.

The Boss "Jayhawk."

Mr. Peck in his story, "The Wagon Boss," says that Gen. Blunt was the boss "Jayhawk," but I claim that Gen. Jim Lane could beat him two to one, at least business, for there at Lexington, between them and the rebels, he put a number of horses and buggies and put them in the Fair Grounds, but the rebels came on us so fast that they could not take them. Gen. Blunt's horse was killed, and the rebels killed some of the horses, thinking our men were in the Fair Grounds, but we were in the cut, out of danger. As soon as the troops had time to form a new line, we took up the retreat. Col. Moonlight had formed a line on the Sna Hills, southwest of Lexington. As we got around the bend of the Sna Hills, the Howitzers threw some shells over our heads among the rebels, for by this time the whole plain in front was filled with horses and men. I could see them scatter as the shells fell in front of them. When we reached the top of the hills the battery was ordered on the retreat, while a battalion of the regiment was left to guard the hill. We soon found the rebels would flank us on both sides. If we stood our ground, so we retreated until we came up with the command, jammed tight in a line with hedgehogs on each side. Here they charged again. When I heard their bugle sounding the charge and saw the rebel line come sweeping down the hill right on us, yelling like demons, my heart almost failed. I had a good head, and I looked around to see what the rest were doing. There stood John Baker, Al. Brandly and a host of others, with their revolvers popping away as fast as they could pull the trigger, and, strange to say, we only had one man wounded in this charge (James Thomas), but we left him for dead in the road. Here Moonlight was in line to help us out of this scrape, by placing a company in ambush that held the rebels back until we got out of the lane and closed the gate. By this time it was so dark we could not see our steps. We hid in the timber close to the end of the lane until the rebels stopped to open the gate, when we fired volley into them at close range, and we could hear the horses and men drop in the road. We took down the bridge over the Sna on the wire road from Lexington to Kansas City. We kept up the retreat all the night until after sun up in the morning of the 19th of October, when we crossed over the Little Blue on the covered bridge. We left a guard at the bridge with orders to burn it as soon as the rebels came in sight. The army went in camp on the hill on the west side of the river, thinking that we would have time to get some breakfast before the rebels would be on us again. We had traveled 40 miles during the night. The command at Kansas City sent some wagons loaded with hardtack, bacon and coffee to meet us at this place. We had just gotten fire started to boil our coffee when we saw the rebels playing a battery on the hill across the Blue, and in a few minutes we saw the smoke rising up from the bridge. I heard afterwards that the rebels put the fire out and crossed on the bridge, but this much I do know: While I was on the skirmish line down in the timber I saw the rebels on our side of the river in a

few minutes after our men left the bridge.

In a few minutes reinforcements began to arrive from Kansas City, and the battle known as the "Little Blue" was fought, lasting all day, when they flanked us on our right, so we had to retreat on our right, and across the Big Blue in the night.

The Kansas State Militia

was camped on the west side of the Big Blue, on the Westport road, and they were very anxious to know if we had seen or heard of any rebels while we had been out. Little did they think that the rebels would charge through their camp and capture some of them before they were 12 hours older. The battle of Big Blue was fought here next morning, Oct. 20, 1864. As we were going through Independence that night we heard the big guns at Kansas City celebrating Sheridan's victory at Cedar Creek, Va. That night we got word that the rebels had been driven back since the nap we had at Sedalia, 36 miles from there, and we had only fed and watered our horses once in the trip.

The 26th of October our regiment

was not in the battle until the afternoon, as we had been pushed on west beyond Westport, over the line into Kansas, where we were ordered to hold for two or three days until it was so dark the rebels could not see us. That night about midnight we got to feed and water our horses, and a few of us went to bed. Before daylight we were in the saddle, going east to Westport to join in with the army in the charge at sun up that opened the battle of Westport. Mo. I thought at the time that we were badly scared, but the battle raged back and forth until past noon, when the rebel line started on their retreat south, the forces under Curtis and Pleasanton joined, and the "jealousies between Generals" that Comrade R. M. Peck tells about began. From this time on I saw a great many moves that I thought were blunders.

Race Between Two Armies.

I am going to write the history of this race between two armies as I saw it for more than 300 miles south of Westport, where I was with the army. I left off. When the rebel army started on the retreat Col. Moonlight was ordered with his regiment, the 11th Kan. Cav., to keep on the right flank of Price's army. That night we stopped to feed at Auberry, 20 miles south of Westport, and some of the men got a little sleep, but I was on picket duty. The next morning we were out of the question. The next morning we were on the move before daylight. Col. Moonlight was very anxious to strike the road leading from Harrisonville to Paola, Kan., and we were the rebels did. As we came to the top of the ridge, about one mile north of Coldwater Grove, and looked down into the valley towards Harrisonville, we saw the rebel army in the distance. I was in the army. There in the plain below us, stretched out in four or five miles, each line three or four miles long and 200 to 300 yards apart. In fact, the whole of Price's army (30,000) was in plain view. After 40 years has passed over my head the picture is as clear as if it were yesterday.

Every move they made showed that

they expected to be attacked by our troops; but as far as we could see there were no Union troops in sight. As soon as they saw the smoke of our guns in position for action, and their skirmishers moved up and began to fire on us. The main course of Price's army was following the Fort Scott road, as we could see by the long train of wagons in the distance ahead; but the army was moving in lines of battle, which they could easily do, as the country was so open and without any hills or a fence in the way. As we drew closer we looked on the Kansas side of the ridge (for we were on the line of the two States). We saw a body of men, and I thought they were Union troops, but they made off to the west. After exchanging a few shots with them we were ordered to follow them. We went out from Paola to capture Price's wagon train. As Col. Moonlight expressed it, "This was your Lyon County tussle."

Why Did Not Curtis and Pleasanton

did not attack Price the next morning after the fight at Westport has always been a question to me. Instead of waiting 24 hours, the Lyon County Militia joined our command, and we marched all that day on the right flank of Price's army. In the evening we got close to the rebel wagon train, and we were on the flank of the line until after noon, when we got orders to go around Price's army and try to get into Fort Scott before Price could get there.

Rest at Fort Scott.

We crossed the Osage River a mile or two above where the Mound City and Fort Scott road crosses. When there we crossed the river, and we were in the road. We took down the bridge over the Sna on the wire road from Lexington to Kansas City. We kept up the retreat all the night until after sun up in the morning of the 19th of October, when we crossed over the Little Blue on the covered bridge. We left a guard at the bridge with orders to burn it as soon as the rebels came in sight. The army went in camp on the hill on the west side of the river, thinking that we would have time to get some breakfast before the rebels would be on us again. We had traveled 40 miles during the night. The command at Kansas City sent some wagons loaded with hardtack, bacon and coffee to meet us at this place. We had just gotten fire started to boil our coffee when we saw the rebels playing a battery on the hill across the Blue, and in a few minutes we saw the smoke rising up from the bridge. I heard afterwards that the rebels put the fire out and crossed on the bridge, but this much I do know: While I was on the skirmish line down in the timber I saw the rebels on our side of the river in a

cannon to wake us up that morning at Fort Scott.

Why there was so much delay here at Fort Scott at this time is more than I am able to say. I am inclined to think the Generals wanted to recuperate, as they held a banquet at the hotel the next night (they said in honor of Gens. Marmaduke and Cable); at any rate, they had a high old time.

Recommencing the Pursuit.

The next morning we lit out after old Pay Price again, and some of us did not close our eyes in sleep again until we lay down about 10 o'clock at night on the battlefield at Newtonia, Mo. Right here is where the strange part of the campaign took place. For the next three days we did nothing, but marched up the hill and then marched down again. For the first day we marched back west to Neosho, Mo., the next day we marched back thru Newtonia, on east to Cassville, and on down the wire road to the Pea Ridge battlefield. This was the most disagreeable day we had on the Price raid, as it rained hard all the afternoon; at night it turned to snow. That night we shivered under the fire, trying to dry our wet clothes. In the morning the snow was about six inches deep. That day we marched back west to Bentonville. The next day we marched back east to Elm Springs, Kan., where Gen. J. M. 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